

Romeo and Juliet abbreviated

Act 4, Scene 1

Fear

Situation: Romeo and Juliet's marriage, as we say, has been kept a secret from her parents. Unaware of current events, Juliet's father makes plans for a Thursday wedding for his daughter and County Paris. Juliet becomes distraught when she learns of her father's plans. She visits Friar Lawrence looking for help. He offers her a solution; a most unusual solution.

JULIET: Come weep with me, past hope, past care, past help.

FRIAR LAWRENCE: O Juliet, I already know thy grief.

JULIET: If in thy wisdom thou canst give no help, do thou but call my resolution wise, and with this knife I'll help it presently.

She shows him her knife.

JULIET: God joined my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands; and ere this hand by thee to Romeo's sealed, shall be the label to another deed, or my true heart with treacherous revolt turn to another, this shall slay them both. Be not so long to speak. I long to die if what thou speak'st speak not of remedy.

FRIAR LAWRENCE: If, rather than to marry County Paris, thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself, then is it likely thou wilt undertake a thing like death to chide away this shame, that cop'st with death himself to 'scrape from it; and if thou darest, I'll give thee remedy.

JULIET: O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris, or walk in thievish ways, or bid me lurk where serpents are. Chain me with roaring bears, or bid me go into a new-made grave and hide me with a dead man in his shroud, and I will do it without fear or doubt, to live an unstained wife to my sweet love.

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Hold then. Tomorrow night look that thou lie alone; let not the Nurse lie with thee in thy chamber.

He holds out a vial.

Friar Lawrence to Juliet

Be merry; consent to marry Paris.

Then tomorrow, this next night, take thou this

Vial and drink its liquor when presently

Through all your veins it shall run letting your

Pulse surcease. Your cheeks shall fade to palely

Ashes, as thy lips. There'll be no warmth or

Breath to testify thou livest. Thou eyes

Shall fall, as when the last day of life dies.

Each stark, cold part shall appear like death. Weep

Not, for dead you'll appear for all to see;

Yet then awake as from a pleasant sleep.

That very night shall Romeo bear thee

To Mantua, free of this present shame.

Surely any womanish fear you'll tame.

JULIET: Give me, give me! O, tell not me of fear!

He gives Juliet the vial.